Post-Apocolympics...

The Christian Radical Takes Issue with the Olympics

April 2010 Edition

An introduction to this issue

A lot has happened in the year since the last edition of The Christian Radical came out in print. Karl and I have parted ways and a new co-editor, Stan, has come on to help with the blog and with this zine. The blog has gone from a daily to a thrice-weekly updated site and the notion of an online only Christian Radical Zine never came to fruition.

There have been some changes in my personal life as well which have been wonderful but which also make me question whether this will be more than just a special issue or if we will resume monthly or bi-monthly production of the print edition. Only time will tell for sure.

No matter what though this is a great thing, being able to see this work in print once again and while I'm hesitant to say if it will continue in print or not I am not in the least hesitant to say I'm glad this issue is coming out and I hope you enjoy it.

I want especially to thank Streams of Justice who have generously offered to pay our printing expenses for this issue in Vancouver. If you are interested in printing this zine in your own community please e-mail the.christian.radical.zine@gmail.com and ask us we'll be happy to send you a PDF version specially laid out for printing.

Thanks and gratitude
Chris
Co-editor

As the world descended on Unceeded Coast Salish Territory to celebrate complacency and spectacle there were others who gathered for something more…

Some of us came across the globe, and others lived here their entire lives, in the lands of their ancestors. And in the face of misled masses who celebrated in contrived corroded bordered identity, we stood united in shared spirit and common soul. Indeed something bigger was at work.

Together, and for the most part, as one, we rerouted torches, demanded to take back the city in thousands, clogged the arteries of capitalism, expropriated and occupied private land, created community space, unfurled banners, demanded justice, shared and broke bread.

Next to a storm of indifference, and in an expression of beautiful diversity, we sustained a spirit of resistance rooted in defiance, creativity and loving community. It is my hope that these pages will bring testament to just some of that spirit.

Much thanks, respect and admiration to those who submitted and to all those, whose tireless work, discourse, analysis, and spirit, brought audacious light to the ways of greed and death.

Stanislav
Co-editor

The Olympics as a strategy for political and ideological captivity
By Dave Diewert

The Olympics performs a variety of significant political and ideological functions. By designating athletes as representing various countries, by showcasing a positive image of the host city and country, and by depending on national security forces for protection, the ideology of nationalism is intensely promoted. People's loyalties to their country are cemented by the rituals of flag raising, singing national anthems, and listening to media commentators highlight the efforts and achievements of their own national athletes. During the 2010 Games, the sea of red and white flags and logos was astonishing, and deeply disturbing. The wild, euphoric displays of Canadian nationalism not only solidified sentiments of allegiance to the state, they eliminated from view current structural oppression or unresolved historical injustices. The nationalistic fever whipped up by the Games served to entrench identity myths about the country and its history, while masking oppression or injustice that continues to flourish away from the centre stage of the sporting events. Criticism was considered being in bad taste, undervaluing the work and aspirations of the athletes, and lacking in national pride. References to stolen native land were ignored, dismissed or denounced while shouts of victory filled the air as Canada won Olympic gold.

The massive corporate investment and sponsorship of the games ensured our captivity to relentless consumption of goods and the entrenchment of commodification. Official corporate sponsors like Coca Cola, GE, McDonalds, Visa, GM, Bell, Petro Canada and the Hudson's Bay Company contributed large sums of money to the IOC and in return were given permission to use Games-related marks in their advertising and promotion within Canada. They are also given special benefits during the Olympics: exclusive advertising space and preferred access to the events. This created a link between large corporations and their products and the feel-good spirit of Olympic athletic performances – a marriage that hides the ethically questionable and environmentally and humanly destructive practices of these corporate giants, or their participation in supporting oppressive political regimes or inequitable trading arrangements. As we cheered on our national athletes, drank our large cokes or added to our Visa card debt, the devastating forces unleashed on human lives, communities or planet earth

by the corporate sponsors, supporters and suppliers of the 2010 Games were hidden from view.

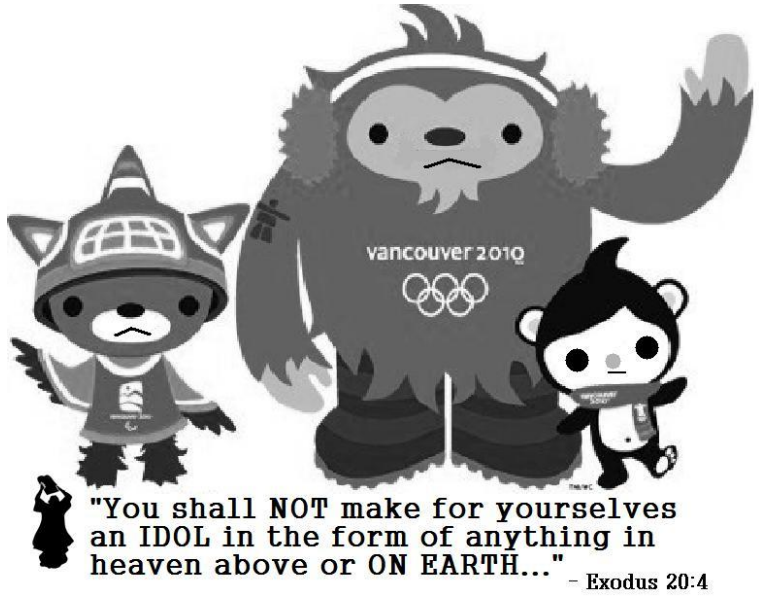
Of course the media is an essential part of every Olympic spectacle. The revenue income they generate by covering the games is massive, as they deliver consumers to advertisers for huge profits. Given the size of the international viewing audience, media have immense power in shaping perspectives and inculcating desires and practices that serve the economic and political elite. These media giants dutifully presented and analyzed every aspect of the Games, sifted through the plethora of activities to evaluate and inscribe particular moments with importance, and dramatized certain moments of triumph or defeat (broken only by an endless iteration of advertisements). They keep us riveted to our seats, spell-bound by these spectacular distractions that are alien to the mundane routines of our daily lives, and "manufacturing consent" to the *status quo* and the interests of corporate exploitation and state power. While millions on the planet die of preventable poverty, hunger or disease and many in our own region suffer needless deprivation, the media-saturated Olympic spectacle kept us focused on esoteric sporting events.

One of the most important functions of the Olympics is to normalize the ideology of competition as the fundamental mode of human experience. In this grand spectacle of agonistic striving, all competitors ostensibly have the same starting point, all contend with each other on the same course, but in the end there are winners and losers. It perpetuates the myth of equality and fairness, of individual effort separating those who "own the podium" from those slouching back to the dressing room, the names of those repeated and honored from those who are quickly forgotten. It is a powerful mechanism of social and economic discipline, of encouraging greater individual training and work in every sphere of life. We are held in the grip of the ideological imperative to succeed or be forgotten, since only the strong taste victory.

The political and ideological function of the Olympic Games, then, is to promote **nationalism** (loyalty to the state, acquiescence to its bureaucratic and coercive power), **consumerism** (loyalty to the corporations, disciplining our desires to the imperative of relentless accumulation of commodities) and **competition** (loyalty to individualism, forming social relationships in agonistic or utilitarian patterns). They constitute the grand spectacle of the empire aimed at luring us into its grasp and seducing us into serving the interests of elite power. During the 2010 Games, hundreds took up a stance of resistance, choosing instead to stand with those destroyed or exploited by such power (indigenous people), those expelled and displaced (poor people), those punished and removed from sight (homeless people).

Jesus, in the wilderness temptation scene, rejected the invitation to use his power and privilege to secure personal comfort, guarantee protection and security in his mission, and ascend the throne of political and economic domination. The movement of liberation he brought was marked by standing with the weak and the vulnerable, challenging the powerful, and paying for it with his life. Loyalty to Jesus and his way is completely antithetical to any allegiance to the state or corporations. It requires saying NO to the embrace of power; and YES to solidarity with the poor, resistance to the ways of the empire, and liberation into a community of generosity, justice and mutual care.

Dave Diewert
Streams of Justice



Introducing Solidarity with Anti-Olympics Convergence Arrestees
By Edward Lee Durgan

Solidarity with Anti-Olympics Convergence Arrestees (SACA), includes anti-olympics activists who were arrested during and directly following the games united with their supporters and defenders.

We are a group of people supporting political agitators that were arrested during the Olympics. We stand in solidarity with all those who are criminalized on a daily basis for resisting or struggling to survive under this capitalist and colonial system. We are raising awareness of the court cases issued for actively resisting the Vancouver 2010 Olympics, as they are trying to prevent people from engaging in resistance. We are raising the issue of police repression through legal strategies, public education and general outreach.

For upcoming events, meeting times and ways to contribute (especially via rad schwag/merch) to the SACA legal defense fund please visit:
http://saca.resist.ca/

Lessons Learnt from Chicago - an Interview with Martin Macias: How to Stop the Olympics from coming to a Neighbourhood near you...
By Stan Kupferschmidt

Martin Macias Jr. is a freelance journalist and member of No Games Chicago, which worked endlessly to rally opposition to Chicago's bid for the 2016 Olympics. On February 8th, 2010 Martin arrived to Vancouver's YVR airport to take part in the Olympic Resistance Network summit and convergence. He was confronted by Canadian Customs agents who denied him entry to Canada after interrogating him for over three hours. I talked to Martin post-apocolympics...

What issue(s) was/were the focus of opposition to the games/the bid? Were some issues more highlighted over others?

We began by fighting to reclaim the hearts and minds of our fellow Chicagoans who had been intoxicated with dreamy images of athletes and nice stadiums. Chicago 2016 spent millions trying to convince their own city this was good for them. Then we hit the city with our platform: no games-better schools, health care reform, invest in public transit. This made it easy to appeal to the masses because we were in the midst of huge cuts to public service and school closings. In the end, we knew we had to reach the ear of the IOC so we pushed the money issue as our biggest issue. We said if Chicago got the bid, the IOC would have to bailout the city (and we had figures to prove it) and that scared them I think.

What groups (if any) came together in opposition to the games/ the bid? Was this unity channeled and carried on afterwards?

It was a coalition of truly grassroots organizations - little if any larger foundations or non-profits. This coalition had only one purpose but the roots still exist and are starting to spring up to address the issues that still affect the city.

Do you see anti-olympics organizing as effectively contributing to the result of Chicago loosing the bid? If so, how?

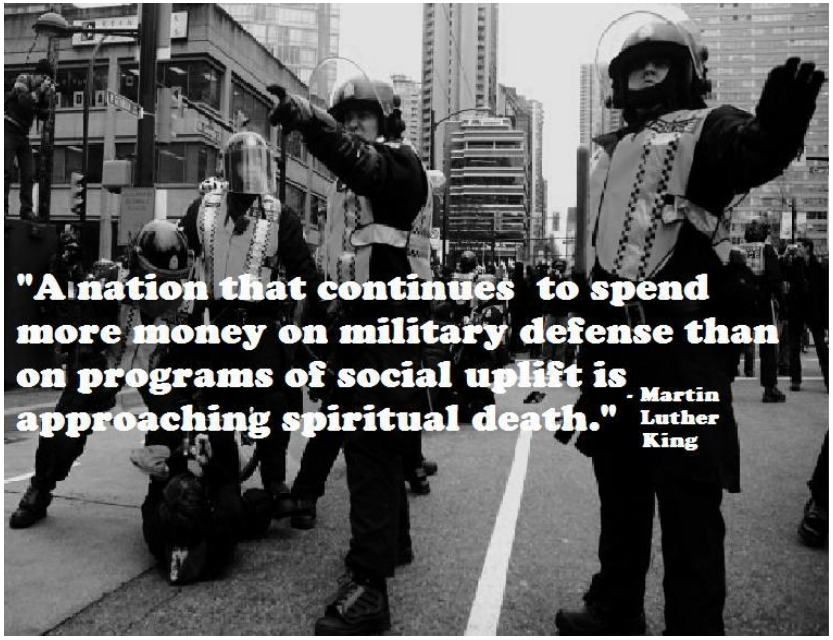
It really is almost impossible to know for sure how much impact we had. Maybe 2% or 98%. I will reveal that we had a "man on the inside" who was able to get high level meetings with actual IOC members who told him our work was critical in their vote. In the end. what matters is that we fought this thing and they heard us!

What lessons can be learnt for future proposed/pending host cities?

"Never, never, never, never give up" as Winston Churchill once said. There were many times when we were scared. underfunded, tired, and demoralized but we fought on. This is critical because whatever groups rise in London, or Sochi, or Rio - they must remember that they're up against a corporate giant! But this doesn't make them untouchable. Remember that "ain't no power like the power of the people, because the power of the people don't stop!"

I'd love to get into further details, but we're pressed for space, solidarity and respect from Vancouver!

Thank you Stan. I really hope to make it out to Vancouver eventually and meet all you wonderful folks who formed an amazing alliance during the games...truly inspirational!


"A nation that continues to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death." - Martin Luther King

Rally for Homes

NO MORE EMPTY TALK
NO MORE EMPTY LOTS

Monday, February 15th | NOON
Pigeon Park (1 W Hastings)
Coast Salish Territories
Vancouver

Organized by:

Power of Women group

VAN.ACT! vancouver action

Endorsed by:

The Downtown Eastside Justice For All Network

SUPPORT THE OLYMPIC TENT VILLAGE!

Endorsed by:

Thoughts on the Black Bloc

By Chris Williamson Rooney
Co-Editor, The Christian Radical

I am very hesitant to write my thoughts on this subject.

First I want to make some things clear. Diversity of tactics is not a bad idea, it can make our movements stronger in the long run, some people can't or won't choose nonviolence and it should not be thrust on them by others. If we want a revolutionary change we need a mass movement, this is the whole purpose of diversity of tactics, it makes a movement possible without adhering to one style of resistance dogmatically. However, for a diversity of tactics to work, real solidarity needs to be cultivated and that means everyone needs to be respected.

I also want to say that window smashing is not in itself violent. If the property destruction of the Black Bloc is violent and worthy of scorn then what of the actions of a plowshares resister who hammers on a fighter jet or a priest who pours blood on draft files?

Smashing a window is not violent but it's also not productive, here's why I believe this:

The windows of a department store are insured against damage anything I can think of that could be wrecked in a black bloc action is.

The people most directly affected by damage done by the Bloc are working class people. They are the janitors of the department store, people who are oppressed by the same corporate machine the Bloc wants to fight. These people don't need the extra work they need to be empowered to join the struggle not be alienated from it.

There is no real class analysis in the breaking of shop windows, there is little forethought and as cathartic or fun as it might be to thrust a foot or a newspaper box through a shop window it doesn't strike a blow for class war. The window was mended in a couple of hours, and someone swept up the glass, probably for minimum wage or no overtime.

There are things about the Black Bloc tactic which I appreciate and commend: the willingness to un-arrest people in a demonstration is both helpful and courageous, the willingness to confront the police and hold the front line in a big march can be equally helpful and brave. There are times and circumstances when the Black Bloc can be as useful as any street medic but these benefits are countered by serious drawbacks.

The anonymity of the Black Bloc makes police infiltration easy, it begs for agents provocateurs and when those windows get smashed the cops get just the excuse they need, not only then to make arrests or create a riot situation but to crack down on the larger movement later. The destruction of property by the Bloc makes a gift to the corporate media who would frame the entire resistance by the actions of a handful of people and who would make much of the divisions it creates in the movement afterward.

I want to come back to property destruction now. I mentioned earlier that to flatly condemn the Black Bloc would make hypocrites of people like plowshares resisters. I think I need to qualify this.

Sabotage and property destruction can be powerful tools for direct action in confronting the state and capitalism and war makers but the difference between a group of people who disarm a fighter jet or throw blood on the gates of a military base and a kid from out of town smashing up a department store is that the first is carefully planned, it's thought out and discussed at length before any action is taken and then the people who did the action use their work as a way to raise issues. The property destruction in a plowshares action is the means to an end and the participants try as hard as possible to ensure that this is so, not afraid to do the time for their actions, while the property destruction seen during the 2010 Games seemed spontaneous to the onlooker and the media ensured this, the actors did so under the black mask of anonymity and provided very little larger context for their action to the public. To the average person it failed as a symbol. To the state and the mass media it was the perfect gift, a way to demonize the resistance and dismiss it all at the same time.

This is only my opinion for what it's worth I believe that the Black Block needs to be re-evaluated as a revolutionary tactic by Anarchists and within the larger context of the movement as a whole, does it represent the expression of a true theory of revolution? This opinion may not be shared by my co-editor I can't speak for him nor would I want to. We need the

courage of the people who would march in the Bloc without the impotent and seemingly directionless smashing of glass. We need more actions that are well thought out and carried to their conclusions even if that means jail and the people willing to stand up and go there. We need careful saboteurs who plan their actions and who can communicate their intentions effectively. We need a revolution with heart not a revolution with masks.

These Days (for Tent Village)
By Anonymous

they said,
people will write about you
for years to come
you will be like seattle, like quebec,
moments they study in social movement theory / from-local-to-global
organizing and organizers

[1]

i look around this created village

he sits in a corner
essays about anarchists in his lap
as soft eyes dart across the parking lot
looking for now-familiar residents
aware of everything other than the pages of his book

he stands taller,
always the strong gait
always the generous smile
one hand a cigarette
two radios three hooded sweatshirts four people calling his name

the pace quickens

she, she has cameras in her face and slogans on her lips
a hat woven of thick fibres and soft wool
she sleeps on hard floor makes excuses and insists
we take the first two out for their birthday

we smell of earth,
mixed with smoke,
mixed with fire embers in our eyes and mud stuck to the soles of shoes
we smell of bananas and onions,
and a closeness without which

breath
would be unimaginable

you taste of tea
of warm herbs and softer hands
water, fire, leaves,
the elements

[2]

this city is lit up before the sun sets,
distress signals loud and clear, streams of wasted energy piercing the sky
the face of the moon taunts us
campers see the stars
replicated in sixty thousand people and thirty-eight million dollars
to create most expensive constellations on an audience cloaked in blue screen
removed, discarded to reveal bodies at the end of the night
branded, unaware
all we see is ashes

and as the red and white travels
so glaring it is
as a plague through the winding streets
pouring out, every restaurant bar patio overflowing with contamination,
we melt
we blow
into heated glass
molded with warm fingers
cracking under the pressure

[3]

what is it about this place?

the way the mountains descend
a horizon only feet above your head
holding the earth firm, it would yet crack under the weight of justice
urban planners line streets with oak trees
canopies of suburban paradise
on the other side

tents, tarps, rope, pegs, stones, gravel
bricks and wood and an axe
grilled cheese sandwiches
chain smokers
a sacred fire

what is it about these people –

an unending stream of metal carts
creaking wheels across uneven ground
dirty or clean, washed wet back forward and return again
invisible armies of bread
and those who slice it fill it grill it eat it
between shades of sunlight and black

it is beginning to be unclear
how privately owned concrete birthed a universe
alter
to nationalism
the wingspan of an eagle over top provides some clue

but i find duct tape and you find homes
he carves soapstone statues
and sells them to passers-by eager for authenticity
only to return,
once more,
to rain-soaked arms

Reflections of Olympic Proportions
by Teresa Diewert

And so it begins with the demo on the Drive
…will the torch arrive?

Well, it doesn't really begin there…

This spectacle has been
a force in my life
a force reckoning with me
pulsing through me
driving me
nearly to destruction.

This machine bent on disruption
found its way with me
burrowing in
gouging hard
penetrating deep
hollowing out
taking everything…

time energy relationship

I couldn't ignore it.

Presenting itself as unity and peace
- a reality of agitation and contention, discord and distress -
dressed in Canadian flags
rags draped from balconies
wrapped round shoulders
roaming round streets cleaned up for special guests
newly arrived to ride the Olympic wave.

The Olympic tsunami
washed over me at times
in exhaustion and despair.
Every spare moment it seemed
taken up
taken over with thought and action.

What should be my reaction?

Hours spent on street corners -
undercover activist slipping bloodied leaflets
into blood soaked blankets at the Bay.
Disrupting family's daytime skating expeditions
with news of weapons of mass destruction.

Chants to children as they line the Drive
"This is what democracy looks like!"
met with childlike confusion and adult disdain.

My own confusion mixed with conviction.
There must be voices of dissent!

…and then there were tents
sucking last bits of energy from me

I tried to see
hope

there, where folks gathered round sacred fires

hope

there, where common purpose united difference

hope
there, where young faces offered revitalized energy
hope

there, where determination delivered homes for all..

all because we would not go away, were determined to stay.

And some say a victory,
and, I suppose it could be said to be
but the cynic in me
finds it hard to celebrate
friends housed in SRO's
outside their known neighbourhoods
coming to visit me now with bellies bitten raw by bedbugs.

It's hard to celebrate.

And, I have to fight the temptation
to despair
and remember who was there

to reroute the torch
and march 4,000 strong
to clog arteries of capitalist greed
and honour women dead and disappeared
to cook and care for hundreds at tent village
and stand watch at its gates

to speak truth to powers
even if they do not hear…

and know…

They can't deny that we were there

Rally for Homes: No More Empty Promises![Feb 15 2010], photo by Van.Act

What did you do During the Olympics?

By Gary Jarvis

In years to come people might well ask ‘what did you do during the Olympics?’ I look forward to that.

Well for one I abstained, I didn’t join in the revelry but I still had a great time. I didn’t volunteer with VANOC. No, I volunteered at the Olympic Tent Village.

Let’s rewind a little to fall 2008. I’ve just started the Radio Program at the British Columbia Institute of Technology. Since arriving in Canada from England I had for the most part either worked as a painter or as a baker. A born talker I was built for radio.

So after a couple of years volunteering fiddling the knobs at Vancouver Cooperative Radio I decided it was time to get serious about this radio lark. I haven’t looked back. Well, not much. In England I’d worked as a union organizer and in Canada I’ve taken every opportunity to join the union, become a representative of locals and participated too in both federal and provincial politics.

So what was one of the first things that we learned at BCIT? 2010 our grad year was to be the year of the Winter Olympics. I knew enough of Vancouver’s heartache over the bid to host the games and also considerably more about the city’s social problems to know that standing on a ski hill holding cable for a camera man was the last thing I wanted to do. Fans of the games might call me a miserable-ist. It’s just that I knew prior to any such offer where I wanted to be during the Games. I wanted to be downtown. That was where the exciting stuff was going to be taking place. I was right.

I knew so because I lived through a major sporting event in England, the 1996 European Soccer Championships. England hosted the tournie that year and went out, yes, in the semi finals to Germany, and yes, on penalties. It’s only a game. Five years after I was in Genoa for the protests against the G8 summit. It was a very different experience of internationalism from that of Euro 96. It was an experience that changed my life and made me determined to live life according to my moral outlook. For the most part I have continued to live up to that.

I briefly tasted that internationalism again at a summit protest in Brussels, and also at various anti-war demos but the best experience since Genoa which most closely matched those large manifestations was the two weeks of protests against the Vancouver Winter Olympics. I never expected that to be so. I really thought the Olympics would be a huge party and that the protests would be so obscure that nobody would notice. I was wrong on the latter. Much has been written about the different protests that took place during the Convergence event of 10 to 15 February. What I want to focus on is the Olympic Tent Village. That was what galvanized my contribution to resistance to the Games.

Before I talk about Tent Village, I have to pay credit where it’s due, to the organizers of the protests that took place during the Convergence. They were exactly what I had hoped for. Having gone to Genoa and experienced different actions and events spread over a four day period I know how useful a multi-day multi-event summit can be in building bridges between people of different political persuasions and organizing hats. In Genoa I marched with the Italian Communists on a rally against racism, and in the following days made firm friends with a ragbag group of Liepzigers, who were much like our ragbag group of Londoners. We marched together, ate together, camped together and told stories and sang to each other round a camp fire in a park in Nervi, ten clicks from Genoa. We basically lived in each others pockets for those four days. Trust grew quickly. That is exactly what happened at Tent Village.

I had no idea that it was to happen but it did. I had no idea that Tent Village was even planned. I had just been so busy with school that I did even think of the Olympics – sports or protest. The Tent Village was probably the most important protest of all during the Olympics. The local media coverage of the Village was patchy but the international media didn’t fail to see the irony of Vancouver’s housing woes against a huge budget for stadia, security and the Athletes Village. The last of which now contains no social housing component. I digress.

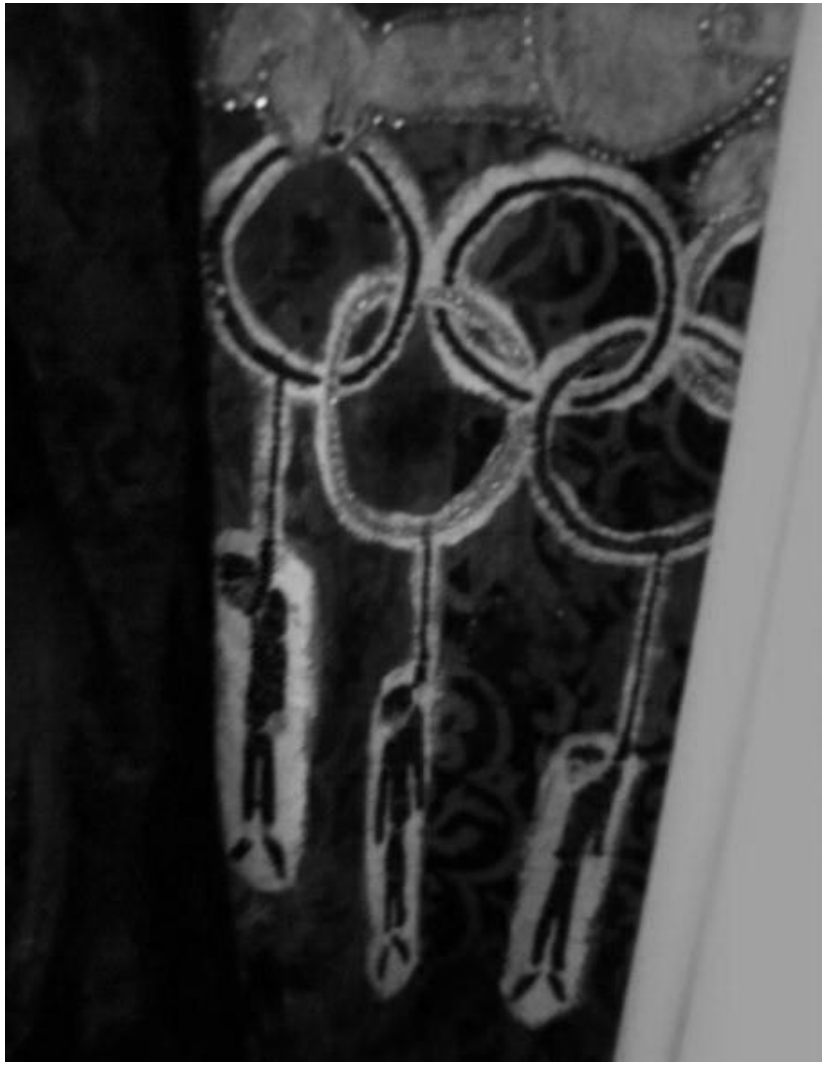
One of the first things I did at Tent Village was to help put up the huge tarp which came to be the main organizing hub on the Village. What was immediately apparent was that here was an opportunity for me to use some of my life skills and know how, to help others. I held a piece of wood, I pulled a tarp. Definitely not rocket science. But I was doing something. Not sitting around waiting for our Governments to do something we hope they

will or hoping that at the next election we'll get a better result. I still firmly believe in electoral politics – proof of that is the booting of the NPA at the last civic election in Vancouver. Getting involved in the practicalities at Tent Village, made me re-realize that if life is to improve for the marginalized, I have to do things, which might just be illegal.

After that first involvement I realized there was a lot more I could do. I know how to cook, to clean. So that's what I did. I made banana bread and brought it to the kitchen at Tent Village. I helped serve food. I got embarrassed when I couldn't open a jar of pickles, I fumbled at making coffee, I excelled at washing up. I got a big kick out of spray painting placards. I should update my resume. Of course these are the things that we don't boast about on a C V but when I was asked at BCIT by various people what did you do during the Olympics I said without revealing too much 'oh I volunteered with the homeless and about 30 odd people got housed as a result.' No I wasn't being disingenuous because I knew that if there was any real interest, a second question would come, which inevitably it did not.

The struggle continues. I regained my faith in that. It had never really gone away but when you get the opportunity to do something as rewarding, as challenging and with as much impact as Tent Village you know that you're on the right path to building a better world, acting locally. I met some great people at Tent Village, had great conversations, the kind of conversations where you talk for one hour before exchanging names. I was inspired by the people around me. Food not Bombs in particular. They wanted soil. I suggested somewhere and sure enough they went and got it. Wow! I was also impressed with folks from Streams of Justice and the Power to Women Group for their continued focus to detail during Tent Village. I also got a kick out of watching people clandestinely talk about banner drops and then within hours it would be done. This is what democracy looks like so goes the chant. It certainly does.

Gary Jarvis is a volunteer radio programmer at Vancouver Cooperative Radio. He's taking the Radio Program at BCIT and works part time at a library.



Resistance has no Borders, Dec 2009
(image taken from a store front in Venice, Italy) by: John Kupferschmidt

Olympic Reflections
By Erin Peters

As we march, we are few;
it's lonely being told to fuck off for standing up for what you believe in-
this is what democracy looks like.

my heart is dragged across the pavement
as the poor are ignored
displaced
painted over
as the middle class are placated
mystified
entranced
as the rich are celebrated
idolized
becoming richer.

And we shake our heads with condemnation
at the frustrated youth
who scream in the streets
but we don't ask
what are they screaming about
we say
take them away, this is unpleasant, this is
disrespectful
while the structural violence they seek to reveal
is buried
by propaganda
and the language of gold and victory.

Our energy is sapped by these structures
they've got us on our treadmill of:
work work work
eat eat eat
shop shop shop
and there's no time for anything else
no space for anyone else,
for looking outside of ourselves-
there's nothing else.

The poor, the recipients of this systematic evil,
they know what's happening
and the rich
they boast of the system they've put into place;
but the ignorant middle class,
are tired and over worked- there's no time to open our eyes-
and so the spectacle entrances us
we want to get what we deserve for all our hard work- we want a party!
thinking is much too difficult, and so
we embrace the corporate lullaby
and gladly slip into its arms, and fall into a drunken sleep.
We, the middle class,
are in the pit of complacency
and it tears my soul apart
this apathy
it will be the death of us all -
when will we arise from our thoughtless slumber?

As we march, we are few
it's lonely,
but He did it too.

Variations on a Nightmare Explained.
By Tim Nessim

At the Olympic opening ceremonies, Vancouver-based slam poet Shane Koyczan read a poem entitled "We are More." The poem was very well received by the media and the Canadian public, and has made Koycan into something of a national celebrity in the past month.

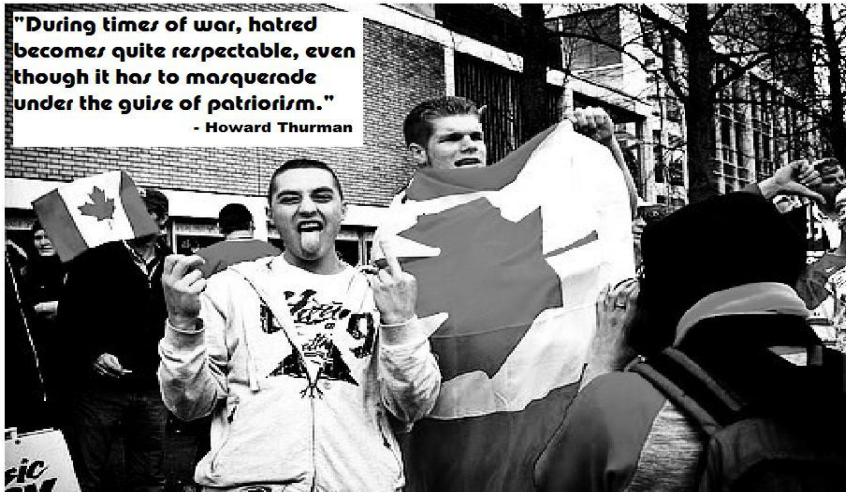
It was a terrible poem. Matters of style aside, the poem consisted of a series of trite, stereotyped images of Canadian identity. Throughout the poem, Koyczan insists that "we (i.e Canadians) are more" than the images he lists,

but he doesn't describe how this is so, which leaves his poem as little more than an exhibitionist display of sentimentality.

So, in response to Koyczan's poem, I've written a little poem piece of my own that challenges his statement that "we are more". It asks the question Koyczan's poem raised but didn't answer—how exactly are Canadians "more?" And, more importantly, who are "we" in the first place?

The homogenous "we" that Koyczan speaks of simply doesn't exist. The only common thread you'll ever find between all "Canadians" is the fact that we live on land controlled by the same state—a state that gained control of the land through brutality, nonetheless. The Olympics, like national identity, are broadcast to the world as "ours," claiming to represent all of us who live within a prescribed geographic territory, which they of course do not.

This poem is about questioning the assumed correlation between inhabiting a particular space and embracing a specific set of values. It's also about articulating the fact that the Olympics, nationalism and Koyczan's poem are by no means applauded by a number of us whom they claim to represent. The poem inevitably becomes verbose and "unpoetic"—very much the antithesis of Koyczan's rousing yet empty poem.


"During times of war, hatred becomes quite respectable, even though it has to masquerade under the guise of patriotism."
- Howard Thurman

Downtown Streets February 28th 2010, original photo by VMC

Variations on a Nightmare
By Tim Nessim

we are more what *is* more?

who are we?

granville, robson, hamilton streets—*whose streets?*—closed.
no parking on hastings (Whose Things?) and there's supposed to be no stopping either but we all know how likely that is
if ya kno what i mean
please don't idle, you're gonna be here a while
traffic is
stuck

we are more?
more than the intransigent banality of worn-out platitudes, perhaps?
more than empty rhetoric, all sentiment and no content?

4500 soldiers in Vancouver
not
Afghanistan
that's a victory I can celebrate
and we (that *we* again)
didn't even riot

we, so socialized by insidious nationalistic fervor that we will dance step on the very backs of our sisters and brothers to celebrate it?
context is everything, friend
we, the dissociated and alienated inhabitants of a geographic space—taken through colonialism, racism and genocide, no less—too vast and sparsely populated to allow for the interconnectedness and knowledge of each other that are the only means through which community and group identity can grow?
try putting that on a Hallmark card

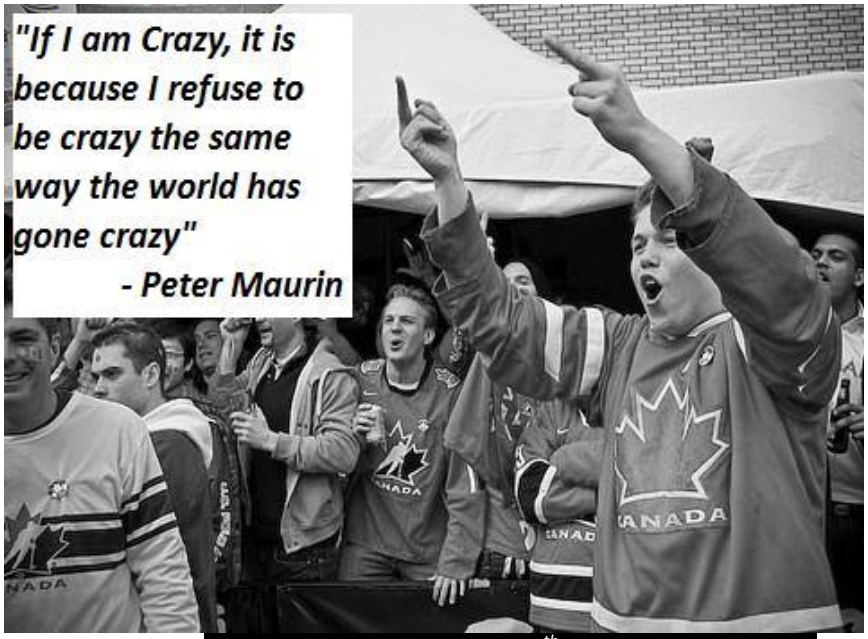
we the citizens or we the insurrection?

we the spectacular or we the spectacle?
we the kitsch and glam or we the real?
shopping or marching

in the streets

whose streets?

our streets



With Glowing Heart, [Feb 28th] photo taken by VMC

Evidence of the publicly funded $1 billion security force unleashed on Vancouver civilians on February 13th, 2010. photo by Murray Bush, VMC

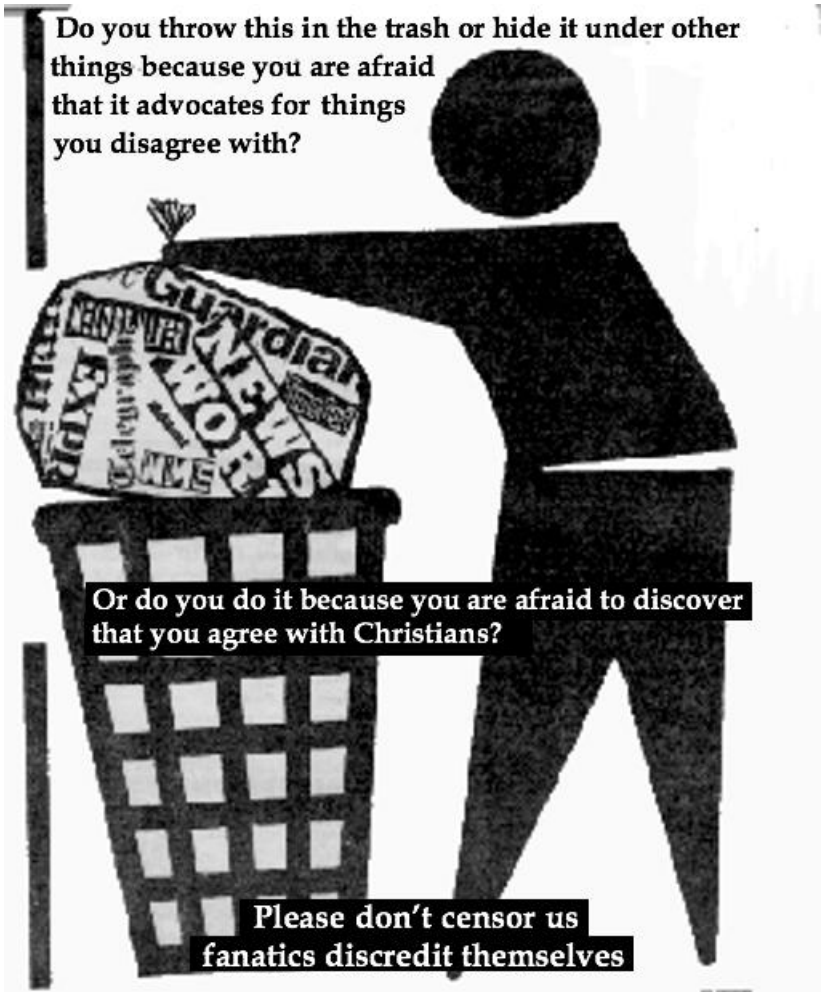
WE BELIEVE SO WE SPEAK
2ND CORINTHIANS 4:13

In past issues of this magazine the last page or two was always dedicated to the bios that I would attempt to get from our contributors, as a way of giving them greater credit for their work and as a way to show our gratitude to them.

Unfortunately this zine came together in such a way that collecting bios would have been rather more difficult than it usually is so instead I would like to offer an incomplete list of the many people who have made this possible in print and online in no particular order they are:

All our contributors named and anonymous
Streams of Justice
The Vancouver Catholic Worker
Stan Kupferschmidt
Sarah Bjorknas
Murray Bush
Vancouver Media Coop
Mike Benedetti
The Olympic Resistance Network and all those who engaged in acts of Olympic defiance and protest no matter how large or small.
And you, for reading this zine
THANK YOU EVERYONE!!

Photo Credits:
VMC – collage image, page 2
SACA - ladder graphic, page 6
Murray Bush, VMC – pages 8, 26 and 29
Vancouver Action - page 20
John Kupferschmidt page 23
Chris W. Rooney – front and back cover images


Do you throw this in the trash or hide it under other things because you are afraid that it advocates for things you disagree with?
Guardian
Or do you do it because you are afraid to discover that you agree with Christians?
Please don't censor us
fanatics discredit themselves